MARVEL
THE ULTIMATES
3
CAMP | FRIGERI | BLEE
AUG. 2024 | RATED T+

Disney Legends

Marvel celebrates

Steve Ditko

2024 Disney Legends inductee

For nearly four decades, the Disney Legends Awards program has honored gifted animators, Imagineers, songwriters, actors, business leaders, and more for the significant impact they've had on the Disney legacy. This year, the 2024 class of Disney Legends will be honored during D23: The Ultimate Disney Fan Event on Sunday, August 11th.

IN MEMORIAM

DON PERLIN
1929 - 2024

Marvel pauses to remember longtime penciler, inker and former managing art director Don Perlin, who co-created Moon Knight and was a mainstay on series such as *Defenders*, *Ghost Rider* and *Werewolf by Night*. Born Aug. 27, 1929, in New York City, Perlin studied under Burne Hogarth and attended the Cartoonists and Illustrators School. He began professional work in the late 1940s and would work with Will Eisner on *The Spirit* comics before being drafted in 1953. Perlin wouldn't come back to comics full-time until the 1970s, when Marvel Editor in Chief Roy Thomas recruited him to draw *Werewolf by Night*. In that series, he co-created the vigilante hero Moon Knight with writer Doug Moench. He also co-created Tigra with Tony Isabella and was the longest-running penciler on the *Defenders* series. In the 1980s, he became Marvel's managing art director, working under John Romita Sr. and, among other things, helping oversee the up-and-coming artists in the Romita's Raiders program. He moved on in the 1990s to Acclaim and Valiant comics, where he co-created some of their most important characters. Perlin was well-liked in the comics field and respected for decades of great work. Our hearts go out to his family and all those who knew and loved him.

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A diabolical genius known as **THE MAKER** used time travel to create his ideal Earth by systematically preventing anyone from ever becoming a super hero and by establishing a secret council of super villains, **THE MAKER'S COUNCIL**, that rules the world from the shadows.

But now the Maker is gone, locked away for the next sixteen months by inventor **HOWARD STARK**. Howard's teenage son, **TONY**, has taken on the codename **IRON LAD** and teamed up with **CAPTAIN AMERICA**, **THOR**, **SIF** and **DOOM** to set things right.

Now they're on a quest to bring on as many heroes to their cause as possible and hunt down the keys to defeating the Maker's Council. Thus far, they've recruited the married duo **GIANT-MAN** and **WASP** and rescued a powerful young woman named **AMERICA CHAVEZ** from the Council's underbelly.

THE ULTIMATES

ROSTER:

IRON LAD
TONY STARK

DOOM
REED RICHARDS

CAPTAIN AMERICA
STEVE ROGERS

THOR
GOD OF THUNDER

SIF
WARRIOR GODDESS

GIANT-MAN
HANK PYM

WASP
JANET VAN DYNE

AMERICA CHAVEZ
COSMIC POWERHOUSE

AUGUST 2024

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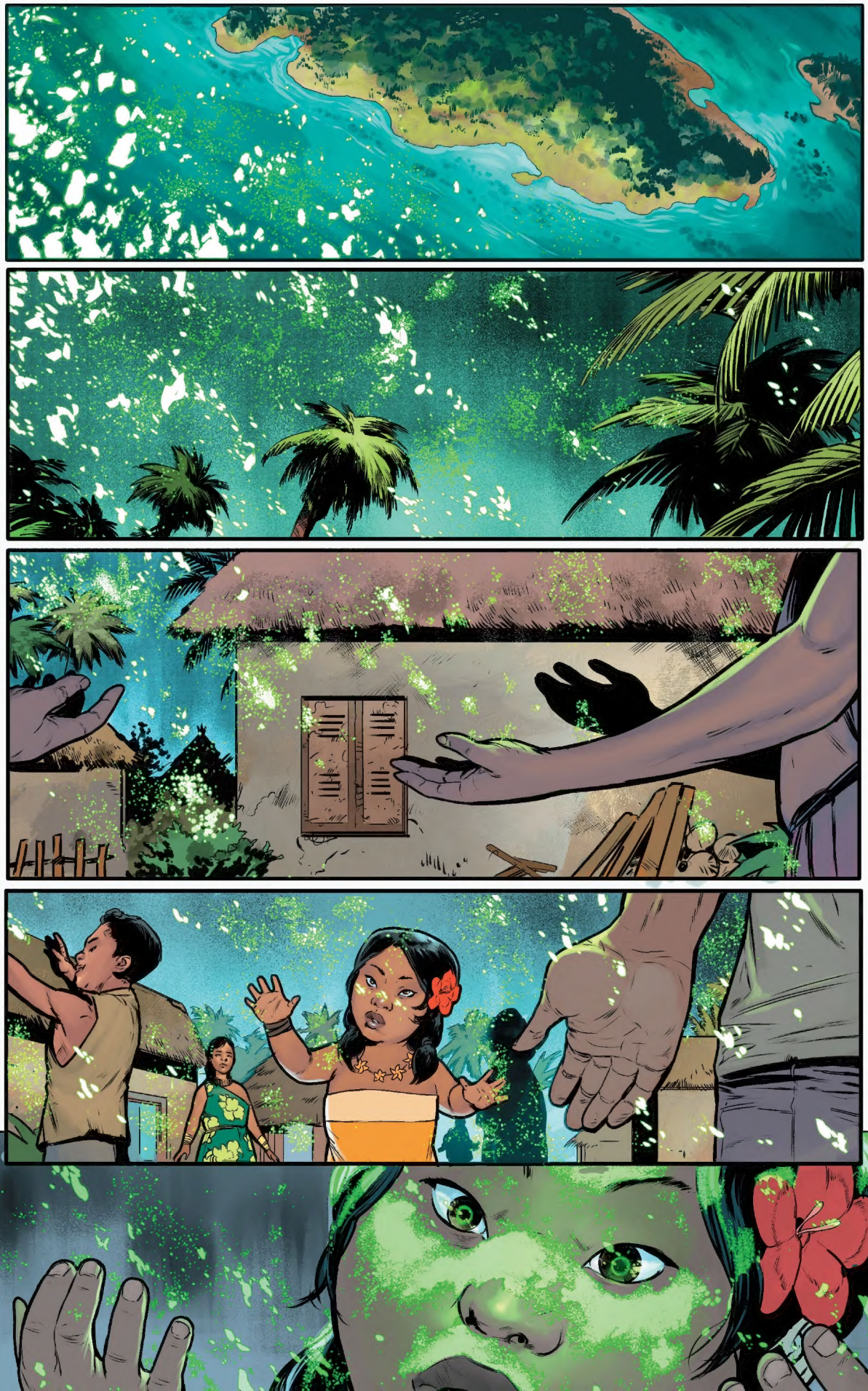
PACIFIC PROVING GROUNDS.
THE BIRTH OF THE HULK.



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No. **62** of 400 Copies

TO: CASTLE GAMMA 3.1 OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Operation Castle Gamma: Report #1

By
[redacted] MC, NAN
[redacted] MD, PhD
[redacted] MD, PhD
[redacted] MD, PhD
[redacted] Lt. Col, MC

Following the detonation of the Banner-Ulam Gamma Bomb (final yield of 22.8 megatons) in [redacted] on [redacted] the nearby inhabited island of [redacted] was bathed in 80 million tons of radioactive fallout. Composed primarily of pulverized coral, water and gamma particles, it fell from the atmosphere as a fine, snow-like powder. 459 men and women were exposed, and the entire island was contaminated, making it the most gamma-concentrated area on Earth.

Though a smaller, and less direct, dose than the one experienced by Director Banner, longer-term exposure has already resulted in dramatic changes to both the flora and fauna. Specimens of *Hemidactylus frenatus*, *Emoia cyanura*, *Parapilumnus cristimanus*, *Carpilius convexus* and *Varanus tsukamotoi* were observed with mass 300% above normal range. The impact on the vegetation appears even greater, with entirely new species observed every day. Attached, you will find detailed notes, photos and measurements of mutations found, but to put it simply: Everything is getting bigger and more aggressive. So much so that the men have started calling it Monster Island.

The effect on the human population has been unpredictable and particular. Some subjects showed immediate signs of gamma sickness. This was especially true of the children, many of whom had innocently rubbed radioactive dust into their skin. Just one day post-exposure, ragged burns rose up on their bodies, described as angry reflections of the island itself (see attached photos). These subjects exhibited vomiting, increased stool production, hair loss, writhing, begging, shrieking, disorientation, aggression and anxiety. Within 14 days, half of all human subjects were dead. Necropsy was performed, and in all cases, cause of death was found to be gamma poisoning.

Minor physiological and behavioral changes were observed in some of the surviving cohort, while others appeared unaffected. Physiological changes included skin color and texture, unevenly distributed increases in mass (e.g., craniomegaly) and the appearance of morphological features associated with other species (gills, wings, hooves), which so far appear nonfunctional. Subject #054, an adolescent female with suction cups covering approx. 20% of her body, was sacrificed moribund and her organs cataloged and preserved in formaldehyde for further study.

Ten of the females were pregnant at the time of exposure, and the babies were born prematurely, resembling piles of grapes or jellyfish. We observed translucent skin and beating hearts but no bones. These specimens were cataloged and preserved in formaldehyde for further study.

After just three weeks of observation, we feel confident this project will be of great scientific value, both to the world and to Director Banner. There is no better place to study gamma's effect on life in general and human life specifically. While it's true that these people do not live as we do—as civilized people do—it is also true that they are more like us than mice or fruit flies.

NOW.
RAAWWWRR!
GRRRRAWW!
ZZZZ KRAK
This must be it. Gamma readings are off the charts.
Yes. I feel it on my skin.
It reminds me of boyhood summers in Muspelheim.
Looks like we fried something getting here. But what was it? These islands aren't supposed to have lizards much bigger than a salamander.
Ah, scientists.

RAOOWR!
Masters of observation, all of you.
Amazing! That thing violates the square-cube law and half a dozen others! It shouldn't exist!
Don't worry, Iron Lad...
...we have much experience with giant serpents and things that should not exist.

ONE MINUTE LATER.
Pfah! I was expecting more of a fight!
Remind me to tell of how I vanquished the dragon who sought to swallow every star in the sky. Now *there* was a salamander worthy of a god.
Tsk. I cut open her celestial belly and ***rehung the sun*** before the Fimbulvetr set in.
You... you *killed* it.
You didn't have to kill it.

Stop hovering, Sif. I am in the bloom of health.
I am not "hovering."
Well, technically your feet aren't touching the ground...
I'll just save my observations for the island.
This place is unbelievable! Decades of gamma exposure have produced flora and fauna here like nothing else on Earth!
Look at the size of this *crab!* Did you know that the distinctive crab-body schema has evolved independently on at least *five* separate occasions?
God loves crabs!
SLASH

Not all gods.
Tsk. Stop doing that. Everything here could be sui generis--one of a kind. Every death is a potential extinction event.
You misunderstand the nature of this island. It is more than merely wild--this is a mad, poisoned place. A place at war with itself.
Don't you feel it?
It would destroy us if it could.
Listen--he wiped these islands off every map and sunk a reef of radioactive battleships to make it impossible to reach them by normal means.
I think he was born here.
Who?
"The strongest one there is. And he's hiding something."

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No. 1 of 2 Copies

TO: CASTLE GAMMA 3.1 OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

OPERATION CASTLE GAMMA: REPORT #482

By
[redacted] MD, PhD

This is my final report.

There is no longer any "we." I'm the only one left alive.

Is anybody reading these? Is anybody there? Why haven't you sent someone? Why haven't you come?

As previously reported, most of the men died defending the research camp. The rest of us were forced to flee into the forest. I am writing this report huddled beneath the broad green leaves of something new and nameless, hiding from giant, carnivorous crabs and a malevolent colony of fire ants with collective intelligence far in excess of any man.

The ants stripped [redacted] and [redacted] to the bone, and the crabs took their time eating [redacted], as if savoring him. [redacted], [redacted] and [redacted] all fell victim to the man-eating flowers and their hypnotic pollen.

We came here to learn about the effects of gamma on biological life. Here are my findings: If you sent the entire Union army to pacify this place, it wouldn't be enough. There are insects here as big as B-2 bombers and much more deadly. There are lizards as tall as skyscrapers, with high-energy gamma waves for breath. There are things that eat those lizards for lunch.

This is not an island. It is a mouth. One that will swallow the world. There is nothing to learn here, except how to die.

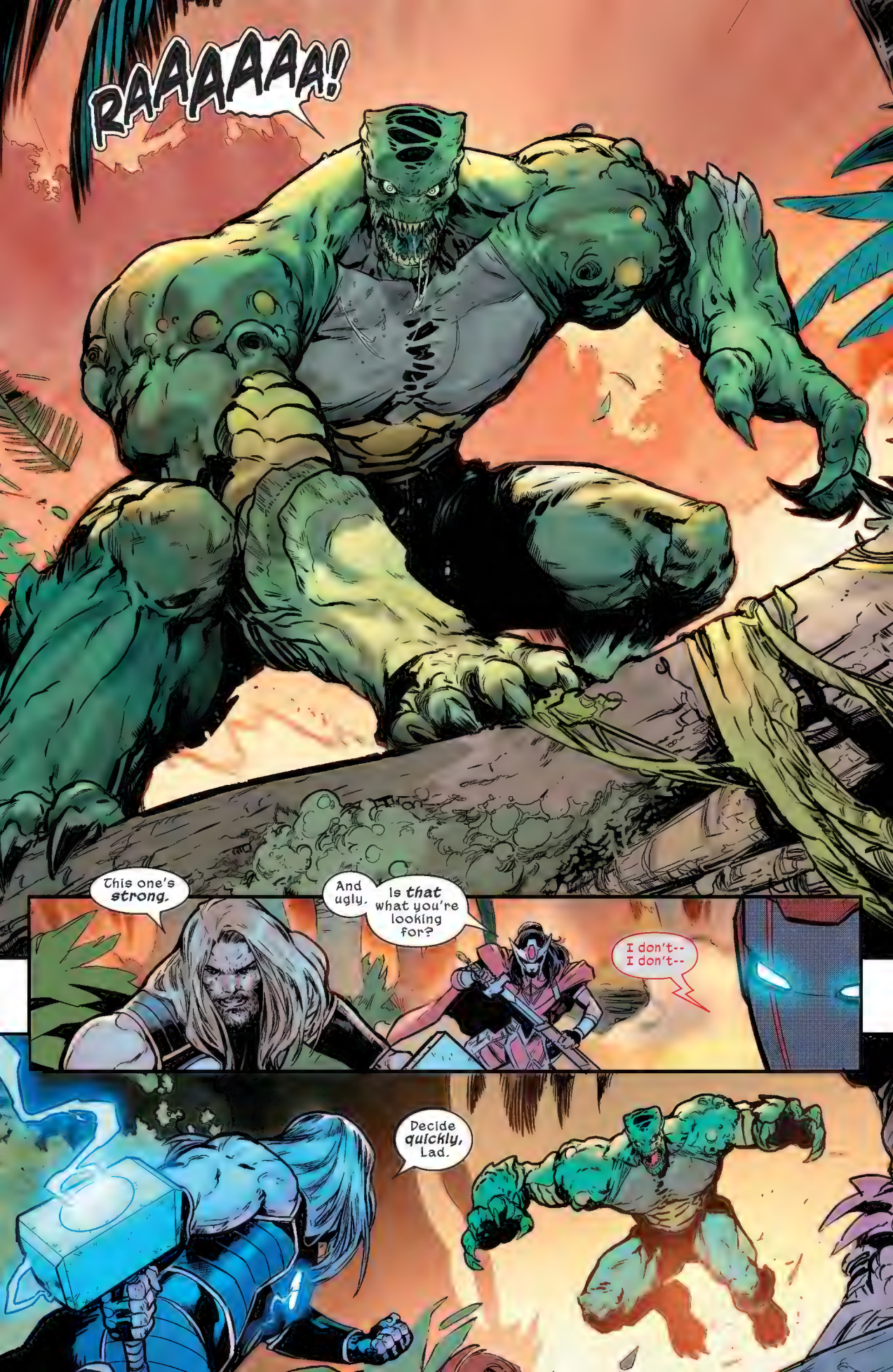
As I write this, it occurs to me that we were part of the experiment all along. That everything that has happened here has been part of Director Banner's plan. We are all subjects to them—will never be anything more than subjects.

I understand now how wrong we were to come here. To do any of this. Would it do any good now to apologize? To say that I have changed? I don't think so.

But I have changed. Am changing. Nearly three weeks without my radiation suit, eating and drinking and breathing the island. I feel something strange growing inside me. Will I shed my skin to become something sleek and new and blameless? Or will I become something worse than before? I am afraid.

Of course you haven't come. Why would you? This is where we belonged from the beginning. The island of monsters.

Everything here is completely saturated in gamma. I've never seen readings like this.
I hope you two don't want kids.
It is not a question of want. It is foretold: I will have children, strong and full of wrath.
They will see the end of days and build the new--
RUNCH
Hhhhh!
Hrrk!
CLUNK
Unh!
CLAP
Hhh!
Who--?!
Oh [redacted].


RAAAAAA!
This one's strong.
And ugly.
Is that what you're looking for?
I don't-- I don't--
Decide quickly, Lad.

OOOuuuu!
WHOMP
SHUNK
SHUNK
SHUNK
SHUNK
CRACK
It barely notices!

I'm afraid it looks like another extinction, Lad!
KRACKADOOM
STOP!

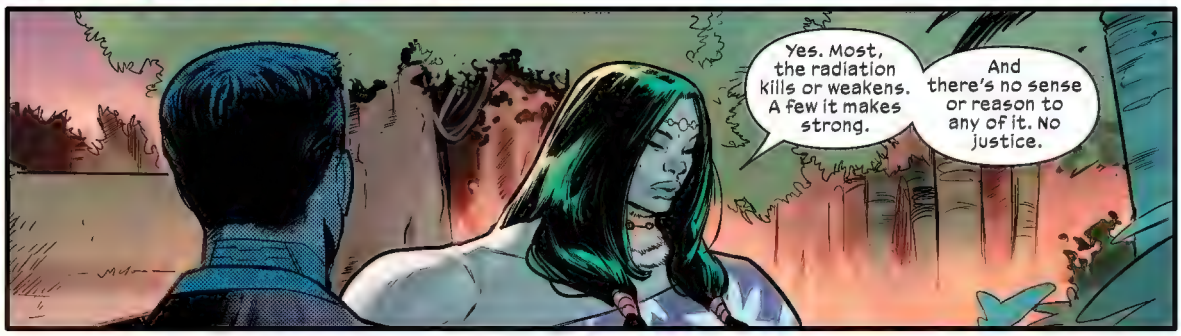
I am Lejori Joena Zakaria, protector of this atoll and *everything* on it.
You are *intruders.* Stop--*now*--or accept my *consequences.*
Well, she is uncommonly eloquent for a monster. And *comely.*
Wait! We just want to talk! We mean no harm!
Hmmph! I've heard *this* before. *Shush,* now. *Shush.*
Ak eo Lik eo Jakeo Lik Eo Jan Jinme Ak eo...
Ak eo Lik eo Jakeo Lik Eo Jan Jinme Ak eo...
Ak eo Lik eo Jakeo Lik Eo Jan Jinme Ak eo...

They said they selected us for our good weather and large lagoons and our many islands for support facilities.
I was a girl when they came. Little men in white coats, surrounded by big men in green with guns.
They offered us money and promised us houses, medicine and the protection of the world governments.
They swore that once all their bombs had been dropped and all their experiments had been done and all their wars had been won...
...they would clean up after themselves and everything would be as it was.
"Trust us." he said. Banner. The so-called "doctor."
We did not believe them and refused. They dropped their bombs anyway.
And left us to live in the fallout.
So there are others like you? I knew it! Don't you see? This could change the balance of world power! An Incredible Hulk Army!
Oh, yes, there are more of us. Come and see.

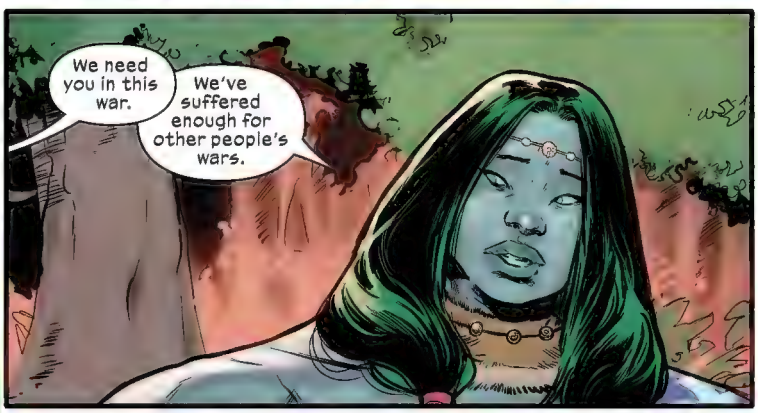
Here-- your "Hulk Army."
This is Tara. She feels everything. The most gentle breeze is agony. For her, life is pain.
You want to put a gun in her hand? Holding it will be torture.
This is Sorry. He cannot speak or feed himself. We think he got lost in his own big thoughts.
He gives no indication that he understands or even sees us. Do you think he will be good for following orders?

And you *met* Abram. He is the youngest. Still just a baby, but when he gets upset...
He ripped his own mother apart in a *tantrum.*
He is *innocent.* How could he understand what he did? What will he do when he is *old enough* to understand?
We are the *lucky* ones. The ones who *survive.*
All of us are sick. And changed *forever.* Even the *sand* is sick here. We--we are afraid to have children...of what they will *become.*
In the summer, a family needs one hundred coconuts a day for drinking water. But the coconuts are *contaminated.* The water burns your throat.
So what are we supposed to drink?
Tell me: What are we supposed to drink?

God, I'm... I'm sorry. I don't mean to be insensitive, but...
...you show a level of self-control that Banner only achieved with *years* of guidance from the greatest psychologists, spiritualists and mystics in the world!
You're *smart.* And *strong,* like he is.


Yes. Most, the radiation kills or weakens. A few it makes strong.
And there's no sense or reason to any of it. No justice.

That's what we're *fighting* for. We're--
I know who you are. The Ultimates. Terrorists.
How?
We have TV. How do you think we learned English?


We need you in this war.
We've suffered enough for other people's wars.

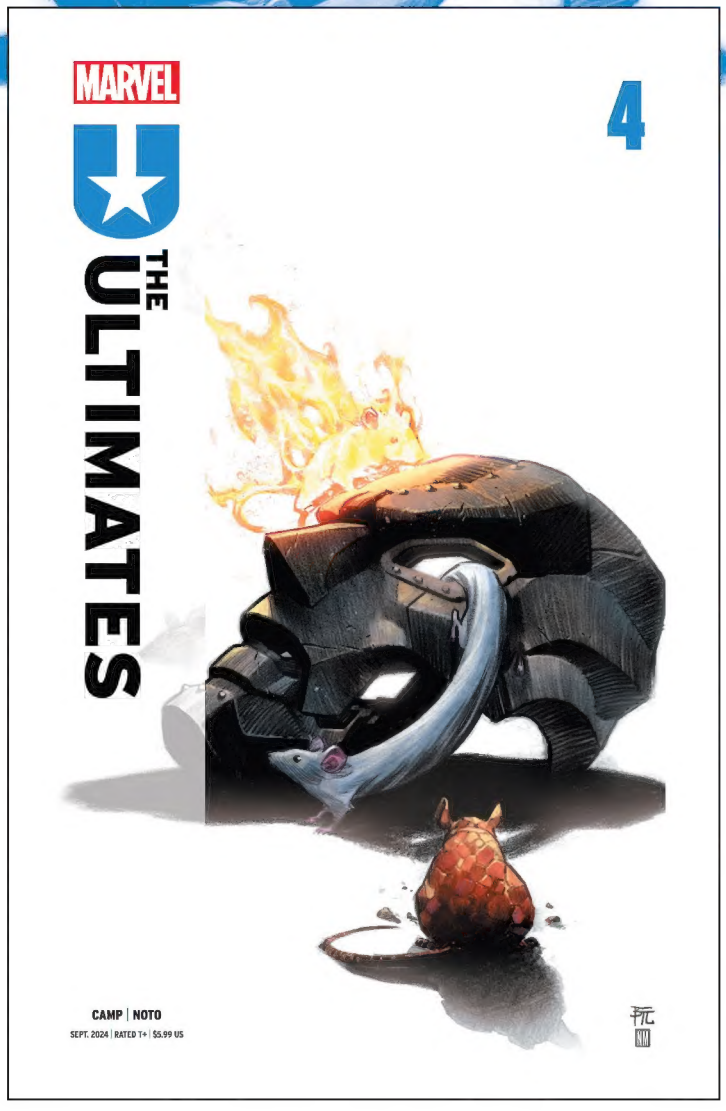
This war is *everyone's* war.
Yours more than most.

What if we helped you? Maybe we can...move you somewhere. Somewhere--
We will not leave. Ever. This is our Lamoran. Our ancestral land. We would rather die here than live somewhere else.
It's one of the awful contradictions of this place. The land that kills us and that we'd die to defend.
And anyway, Banner would never allow it.
How can you just do nothing? After everything he's done...doesn't it make you angry?
...Angry?
"Have you ever seen someone die of gamma poisoning, Iron Lad? It is a slow, painful death, full of confusion, rage and change.
"We've seen it hundreds of times.
"I watched foul mouths with crooked yellow teeth grow on my mother's body, and saw my father sprout feathers and attempt to escape into the sky."
Every day, they were brand-new people. And though we never left their sides--not even for a moment, not even once--still they died completely alone. Unimaginable even to themselves.
Angry? We were born into the wounded belly of the world.
You can't imagine my anger. What has been done to us is an abomination. But I won't allow you to use our anger. We have been used enough.

You want my *strength?* You want my *rage?* Then you'll have to *pay* for it.
Well... I don't have the *resources* my father--
Fix our island. Make it like it was before the bombs.
If you do this for us...then I'll *show* you strength.
I don't know if that's even--I mean, a massive remediation job...scraping the topsoil off the *entire island*...
...and repeated applications of potassium fertilizer, *tons* of it...all under Banner's nose...
This is my price. *Fix the land.*
You said from the beginning you wanted to fix the world, didn't you?
"No...no, it just won't do."

Trespassing on sacred land... interfering with long-running experiments... forging destabilizing alliances...
Assemble the *Immortal Weapons.*
These "Ultimates" are starting to make me *angry.*
FIFTEEN MONTHS REMAINING...

NEXT



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